

Fall 2007

# Inthemion

North Carolina State Capitol Foundation

## STATE HISTORIC SITES, CAPITOL PREPARE FOR CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL

By Terra Steinbeiser, Education Programs Specialist

With the 150th anniversary of the Civil War less than four years away, the Division of State Historic Sites (SHS) is beginning to explore a new approach to interpreting the Civil War in North Carolina. From 2011 to 2015, SHS plan to apply a multi-faceted approach to interpretation and education that will create a complete picture of the Civil War in this state, from pre-war sectionalism through the era of Reconstruction. As part of this initiative, the Capitol staff will be enhancing and updating the interpretation of the war at this site in order to expand the view of the State Capitol's role in the Civil War.

In preparation for the commemoration, SHS requires each site to broaden its view of the conflict and how it affected North Carolinians politically, socially, and economically. It will be the most complex and thorough examination of the entire period ever attempted by the state through its historic sites program. One of the highest aims of the project is to connect the stories of the state's individual Civil War sites like a book, with each site acting as a chapter in the greater narrative of North Carolina's war experience. A second goal is for each site to develop a new curriculum-based Civil War education program for eighth grade students that will continue to be used beyond the sesquicentennial period. Additionally, sites will host special events, programs, lectures, and exhibits on a multitude of topics dealing with this singular period in our state's history.

The sesquicentennial presents a special opportunity to the Capitol because as the epicenter of the state's



This 1874 photograph of the House of Representatives is one of the earliest known images of North Carolina's first black legislators. During Reconstruction (1865-1877), Tar Heels elected more than 70 African American men to serve in the state General Assembly. The stories of these legislators will be an important part of the Capitol's expanded Civil War interpretation. Photo by Rufus Morgan, courtesy of UNC, Appleton Oaksmith Papers.

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*Edward T. Davis*

On June 2, members of the North Carolina State Capitol Foundation and friends toured the newly restored Capitol of Virginia. The purpose of the trip was to view the capitol in Richmond as restored to its 1905 appearance and, importantly, to study the imaginative underground facility which serves both as entrance to the capitol and the interpretive center. Richmond resident and SCF board member Kristy Lee, along with her husband, The Rt. Rev. Peter Lee, graciously hosted an evening cocktail party for our group following the afternoon tour of the capitol.

Virginia possesses one of the nation's most distinguished capitol buildings. Designed by Thomas Jefferson and modeled externally after the Maison Carée, a Roman temple constructed in Nîmes, France, in the first century, A.D, it has served both as the capitol of the Commonwealth and as the Confederate Capitol.

By design, the Virginia Capitol has one "front" – the familiar ionic portico high on a hill facing the James River. Entrances were initially located at both sides of the building. When the structure was remodeled and expanded in the early twentieth century, the main entrance for both legislators and for the visiting public became the back door. Thomas Jefferson intended that this temple be seen and appreciated from the portico – the building's "front door." This intent had been lost through additions and an invasive canopy of trees. The ingenious new underground addition has provided the space for interpretation of this important structure, and provides the meeting space needs of the twenty-first century General Assembly.

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*State Capitol Foundation Board members and the Capitol staff traveled to Richmond in June to tour the recently completed Virginia Capitol Extension.*

*This newsletter is funded by the Barbara H. Boney Publications Fund*

## *Anthemion*

*A Publication of The State Capitol Foundation, Inc. and The State Capitol Society*

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Volume II, Issue IV

*Anthemion* is published quarterly by The State Capitol Foundation to provide information about and build support for North Carolina's State Capitol. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please contact Capitol Education & Publications Specialist and *Anthemion* editor / designer Terra Steinbeiser at 919-715-3962 or via e-mail: [terra.steinbeiser@ncmail.net](mailto:terra.steinbeiser@ncmail.net)

For more information about the State Capitol, visit our Web site at [www.ncstatecapitol.org](http://www.ncstatecapitol.org), or call 919-733-4994.



# The Capitols of Virginia and North Carolina: Two National Landmarks

By John L. Sanders, First Vice President

Virginians, like North Carolinians, consider their capitol to be their iconic state government building. That the original design of the Virginia structure was largely the work of Thomas Jefferson lends it a sacred quality.

Built on the commanding hilltop above the James River in Richmond in 1785-88, the Virginia Capitol was the first major American building to be cast in the outward form of a Roman temple. It was the principal early product of Jefferson's romantic rationalism – the idea of fitting the headquarters of state government into the rigid confines of a narrow box. It has, however, housed the General Assembly and the Governor since 1788. During the Civil War, it also accommodated the Confederate States Congress.

While the 1788 stuccoed brick exterior of the capitol appears to have changed little over two centuries, the structure has undergone many internal alterations. In 1904-06, the interior was largely gutted from the basement through the roof and rebuilt internally somewhat along earlier lines. Thus rooms, such as the House of Delegates' chamber, that are now presented as the sites of historic events are in fact recreations of the original spaces, more or less in earlier form.

In 1904-06, wings were added to accommodate the Senate and House of Delegates and their officers. Recent extensive renovation and renewal of the whole capitol have put it in pristine condition. But what one sees today is an admirably restored early 1900s recreation in modified form of Jefferson's 1788 interior.

In contrast, the North Carolina State Capitol, built in 1833-40, only five decades after the Virginia Capitol, is remarkably little changed in visible ways, outside or inside, from its original form. It was better constructed of more durable materials (stone instead of brick walls in particular), and has suffered none of the destructive changes, accidental or purposeful, that its Virginia counterpart has experienced. Nor was it so readily enlarged, so its exterior remains unchanged.

In consequence, the visible features of restoration of the Raleigh capitol have largely consisted of conserving



*The Virginia Capitol, known as the Temple on the Hill, has undergone many changes since its original construction in the late 1700s. Photo by Terra Steinbeiser.*

and exhibiting to advantage its original 1840 form and materials – stonework, woodwork, ornamental ironwork and decorative plaster. The supervising architect, David Paton, and early occupants would readily recognize its features, large and small. Indeed, they might wonder why so little has changed since 1840.

One distinct advantage of Richmond over Raleigh: the impressive and functional new interpretive center, built into the hill on which the Capitol stands and providing public access to the site. This facility is described in further detail in *The President's Column* on the preceding page.

**Want to check it out for yourself?**

**The Virginia Capitol is open to visitors  
Monday-Saturday, 8:30 am to 5 pm  
and Sunday from 1-4 pm.**

**Groups of 10 or more may schedule a  
tour by calling 804-698-1788**

# Many Thanks

The State Capitol Foundation gratefully acknowledges the generosity of those individuals, organizations and corporations who have made contributions to the Foundation. Gifts appearing here were received between April and July 2007.

**William B. Adair:**

*Gift of \$100 in honor of the French-American Cultural Foundation's Artisan Scholarship program*

**Alexander Charitable Foundation:**

*Gift of \$1,500 on behalf of Thomas W.A. Alexander for the Spring 2007 newsletter*

**Mrs. Vivian S. Allen:**

*Gift of \$100 in honor of Rep. Bernard Allen*

**Capital Community Foundation:**

*Gift of \$1,000 on behalf of Don Munford for the Spring 2007 newsletter*

**Edward Davis:**

*Gift of \$300 to the Barbara H. Boney Publications Fund*

**William W. Dodge III**

*Gift of \$250 in honor of the Hon. Ramsey Dodge for use in the Senate Chamber*

**Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Drew II:**

*Gift of \$100 in honor of Raymond L. Beck*

**Rufus Edmisten:**

*Gift of \$1,000 to the Barbara H. Boney Publications Fund*

**E.A. Morris Charitable Foundation:**

*Gift of \$10,000 to the James S. Lofton Trust*

**North Carolina Questers:**

*Gift of \$4,000 for the legislative carpet project*

**North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati:**

*Gift of \$1,000 (undesignated)*

## Civil War

*Continued from cover*

power, it had a direct or indirect role in nearly every aspect of North Carolina's involvement in the war. From the secession debates that raged in the legislative chambers to the difficult decisions made by Governor Vance in his first floor office, and the theft of the state's copy of the Bill of Rights, the echoes of the Civil War are inescapable inside the Capitol. In August, the staff began examining the site's current interpretation and continues to search for ways to incorporate and highlight previously unexplored facets of the Capitol's war story. The staff seeks to draw attention to the Capitol as it existed and how it was used from the 1850s-1872.

The support of the State Capitol Foundation will be vital in accomplishing these educational and interpretive objectives, namely through the completion of several projects that will allow the Capitol to achieve an appearance more accurate to the Civil War period. Ideally, by the kick-off of the sesquicentennial in 2011, the Capitol staff hopes to have accomplished the installation of more accurate carpeting in the legislative chambers; completed the acquisition and re-creation of the State Supreme Court chambers on the first floor; finished the re-creation of General Milton Littlefield's "Third House" in the West Committee Room; and to have replaced the first floor office lighting with more accurate reproduction fixtures. Look for updates and news on North Carolina's Civil War Sesquicentennial in future issues of *Anthemion*.



*The story of the Capitol's use as a Union signal station at the end of the war is just one of many Civil War stories that will be explored further for the 150th anniversary.*

*This altered photo of Lt. George Round was taken in May 1900, when he returned to Raleigh to deliver the Memorial Day address at National Cemetery. During his visit, Round revisited the Capitol dome, which served as his signal station post in April-May 1865. Photo courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives.*





# Artifacts Needed to Complete “Third House”

By Tiffianna Honsinger, Collections Manager

In preparation for the upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial, Capitol staff is organizing several building-related improvement projects. The first of these includes the re-interpretation of the West Committee Room as the “third house” of North Carolina’s Reconstruction legislature.

Originally a joint committee room for the house and senate, the room has served many functions over the years, including acting as a post office, rest room facilities, and even a snack bar. Since the Secretary of State vacated the room in March 1996, the staff of the Capitol have been working to restore the room to its 1850s-1860s appearance.

During the Reconstruction period, Union Army General Milton Littlefield, a carpetbagger from New York, occupied the room. Between 1867 and 1868, he used it as his personal office and makeshift bar—which became notorious as the “Third House” of the North Carolina legislature, so called for the many political deals said to have been made there. William Bernard, editor of the *Wilmington Morning Star*, reported the room held “a plentiful supply of costly wines, brandy, whisky, rum, etc... and in this manner...\$240,000 was paid out [by Littlefield] either in “liquor” or on cash bribes to secure the passage of the

law.” Other reports indicate that the room was set up as a tavern and that more than 9,000 pounds of ice was used in four months.

In the spirit of refurbishing the room to this period, the following items were added to the collection: a late 19th century hand-tied birch bark hearth broom, a brass “porch candle,” a wooden Gloag’s Perth Whisky crate, and a period appropriate perpetual calendar. Additionally, several mid-to-late 19th century bottles and “warranted flasks” have been accessioned, to give the room the appearance of an occupied tavern.

While many artifacts for the room’s restoration are already in place, like Mitchell’s 1844 US map and the original 1840 joint committee table, in the coming months we will adding additional artifacts to enhance the space. Therefore, I would like to invite any foundation members—or, your friends—to donate artifacts to this cause. Specifically, we need liquor bottles, glasses, serving ware, and American made barware from the 1860s-70s. Additional artifacts, such as cigar boxes and spit boxes would also be helpful. If you have any artifacts of this type you would like to have considered for accession to the NC State Capitol collections, please contact our Collections Manager, Tiffianna Honsinger, at 919-733-4994.



SAVE THE DATE

*State Capitol Society Ball*

APRIL 5, 2008

DETAILS COMING SOON!

# Capitol Takes Spooky Approach to History

By Terra Steinbeiser, Education Programs Specialist

On the evening of October 27, the Capitol staff anticipates that hundreds of people will venture downtown in hopes of finding out for themselves whether the 167-year-old building is indeed as haunted as some say. Last year, the Capitol unveiled *Scare on the Square* as a new event to allow the public a rare glimpse into what is rumored to go on at night behind the stately granite walls. The event was an overwhelming success and has been added to the list of the site's regular annual programs.

Visitors who embark on the eerie tour are treated to a sample of the old ghost stories that have been passed down from former night watchmen and long time occupants of the Capitol. Additionally, findings presented by members of the Pennsylvania-based Ghost Research Foundation (GRF) who have spent several evenings at the Capitol over the past few years investigating the possibility of paranormal activity in the building are highlighted on the tour as well. But visitors also get a heavy dose of real history; albeit history presented in a decidedly non-traditional way.

Though on the surface spooky stories and paranormal research appear to have little to do with serious history, they do serve an important function. The purpose at the heart of *Scare on the Square* is to grab the attention of audiences who traditionally might not visit a historic site such as the Capitol. *Scare on the Square* uses the ubiquitous historical ghost story as a starting point to introduce chill-seekers to different aspects of the Capitol's history that are not a part of the every day tour. Mixed in

with the stories of creepy happenings are stories about 19<sup>th</sup> century governors, interesting Civil War tales, and past traditions surrounding death and funerals. The tour also seeks to explain why stories about the Capitol being haunted (along with countless other historic places) may have originated in the first place.

The tour begins with a brief introduction outside before groups are ushered into the Capitol's darkened rotunda. Long black mourning drapes hang from the upper rails, recreating a photograph taken in 1912 of Governor Charles B. Aycock's coffin lying in state. The scene illustrates just one of the many forgotten funeral rituals that were diligently practiced in the Victorian era. The candle-lit tour then heads upstairs to recount some of the many tales associated with the legislative chambers, like that of the Senate's "bleeding wall." The most chilling part of the tour for many is the trip up to the third floor State Library, which has been tagged as a hot spot for reported paranormal



*This 1912 photo shows Governor Aycock lying in state in the Capitol. The scene will be recreated for Scare on the Square.*

activity by GRF researchers. Here, visitors have a chance to hear recordings of electronic voice phenomena (EVP) collected from different investigations at the Capitol. EVP are gathered by researchers who go into a room and use recording equipment while asking questions they think may trigger a response. For some, the sounds on the tape are irrefutable evidence that there are ghosts lurking about the Capitol. Others believe the muffled sounds can be chalked up to any number of logical explanations. Either way, you won't really know until you come and experience the Capitol after dark for yourself.

**SCARE  
ON THE  
SQUARE**

**Saturday, October 27, 5:30-9:30 pm**

Tours depart every 30 minutes

Activities for children, hot cider & cookies, and live music will entertain you outside while you wait for your tour to begin

Admission is FREE, but pre-registration is strongly encouraged for this popular event.

For more information or to register, please call 919-733-4994





## President *Continued from pg. 2*

In order to meet the program of the capitol, the commonwealth called in historic renovation architects of Hillier Architecture, whose previous work includes the renovation of the U.S. Supreme Court Building. After a series of studies, the architects determined that the new entrance would need to be located below the building in order to appreciate the intended view and to provide needed additional meeting space - all located underground. The resulting project is stunning.

The entrance to this facility is located at the street level below the structure and is modeled on the design of Alexander Jackson Davis's Temperance Temple located at Bremo Plantation in Fluvanna County, Virginia.



*In the Capitol Extension's interpretive space, Jim Wootton (left), of the Virginia Capitol Foundation, speaks to SCF board members about the multi-million dollar project. Photo by Terra Steinbeiser.*

Alexander Jackson Davis, the principal architect for North Carolina's capitol, was the most prominent American architect in the first half of the nineteenth century. The selection of one of his designs for a Virginia client, modified to be an entrance to Virginia's capitol, is appropriate as it provides a design in the classical tradition and does not compete with Jefferson's monumental portico.

The new underground facility, faced with Texas and Jerusalem sandstone, serves as an interpretive center, much-needed legislative workspace, a gift shop, multipurpose rooms for various state functions and a restaurant. The cost of the capitol restoration and the new underground entrance exceeded \$110 million.

The North Carolina General Assembly has just authorized funds to plan for a Raleigh Visitors' Center. An important component of the facility will be interpretive areas for our capitol. The Virginia Capitol is of national importance primarily due to its connection with Thomas Jefferson. The connection is critical to understanding that building. Likewise, it is not possible to appreciate our own national landmark without understanding the sweeping economic, political and social reforms inaugurated by progressive leaders in North Carolina culminating in the construction of this most sophisticated of American state capitols.

It was my pleasure on July 11 to give a tour of the North Carolina Capitol to Dr. Nir Buras, President of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of The Institute of Classical Architecture and Classical America. Dr. Buras stated that "nothing of this architectural sophistication exists in the city of Washington. How did this happen in Raleigh?" We will be working to make sure that story is told.

## Calendar of Events

### Veterans' Day Parade and Ceremony

**November 12**

A parade, wreath-laying ceremony, and patriotic concert will honor the state's veterans. Parade begins at 9:30 am. Ceremony will take place at the North Carolina Veterans' Monument at 11 am.

### Governor's Tree Lighting and Holiday Festival\*

**December 5** (tentative date)

Festivities begin with the lighting of luminaries and musical performances on the Capitol grounds. The Governor and First Lady will light the State Christmas Tree during the traditional ceremony on the west grounds. After the ceremony, visitors are welcomed inside the Capitol for an open house and to take in the Raleigh Garden Club's decorations. The Junior Woman's Club of Raleigh will host a holiday festival featuring music and children's activities on Union Square, in the museums, and on Bicentennial Plaza

### Holiday Open House\*

**December 5-9** (tentative dates)

The Capitol will be decorated for the holidays by the Raleigh Garden Club. Local performing groups will provide concerts of holiday music daily during the hours of the open house.

### Civil War Christmas Encampment\*

**December 8** (tentative date)

Re-enactors will demonstrate how to make period Christmas ornaments, dip candles, and allow children to participate in Civil War military drills.

*\* Dates and times will depend on the Governor's schedule. Please call 919-733-4994 for more information about any of these events.*

# Become a Pillar of Society: Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian

## State Capitol Society Membership & Donation Form

Membership benefits include a handsome cast-metal State Capitol pin, yearly membership card, subscription to *Anthemion* quarterly newsletter, reduced rates for annual history excursions, reduced admission to Capitol social events, invitations to public programs, & special tours by request for your organization or company.

### Levels of Membership

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/ Student Membership | \$10    |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Ionic Membership           | \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corinthian Membership      | \$2,500 |
| (corporate 2 years, individual 3 years)             |         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crown Membership           | \$5,000 |
| (corporate 3 years, individual 5 years)             |         |

I am a ☐ New Member ☐ Renewing Member

Please return this completed form with your check or money order (payable to the NC State Capitol Society) to:  
The State Capitol Society, North Carolina State Capitol,  
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